

# Childhood obesity persists into adolescence

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(HealthDay)—Greater weight gain in early childhood often carries over to overweight and obesity in adolescence, according to a study published in the Oct. 4 issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

Mandy Geserick, from the University of Leipzig in Germany, and colleagues assessed the age at onset of obesity in a population-based sample of 51,505 children who had sequential anthropometric data available from childhood through adolescence (0 to 18 years of age).

The researchers found that in retrospective analyses, most [adolescents](#) with [normal weight](#) had always had a normal weight throughout childhood, whereas 53 percent of obese adolescents had been overweight or obese since age 5. The [body mass index](#) (BMI) standard-deviation score further increased with age. In prospective analyses, almost 90 percent of the children who were obese at age 3 were overweight or obese in adolescence. The greatest acceleration in annual BMI increments occurred between ages 2 and 6 years. Among children born large for [gestational age](#) (43.7 percent), the rate of overweight or obesity in adolescence was 1.55 times higher than among those who had been at an appropriate weight for gestational age (28.4 percent) or small for gestational age (27.2 percent).

"In this current population-based longitudinal study, we found that obesity occurred early in life and once present, persisted into adolescence," the authors write.

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